HAER No. NV-16

Slaughterhouse Canyon Railroad Grade
South of Nevada State Highway 28 on the
east shore of Lake Tahoe
Carson
Carson Independent Municipality
Nevada

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

SLAUGHTERHOUSE CANYON RAILROAD GRADE

HAER NO: NV-16

Location:	South of Nevada State Highway 28 on the east shore of Lake Tahoe Carson Carson Independent Municipality Nevada U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute, Marlette Lake, Nev., quadrangle Universal Transverse Mercator coordinates: 11.246120.4334560 (SW end) 11.246710.4334720 (NE end)
Date(s) of Construction:	Circa 1876-1890
Engineer/Architect/Builder:	Carson and Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company (CTLF), incorporated in 1873 in the State of Nevada, its primary stockholders being Duane L. Bliss, H.M. Yerington, D.O. Mills, and J.A. Rigby. Bliss was made president and general manager and held the office until his death in1906.
Present Owner (s):	United States Department of Agriculture, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.
Present Use:	National Forest Recreational Use/logging road.
Significance:	The Slaughterhouse Canyon segment of the Lake Tahoe Railroad represents technological efficiencies attained in order to meet the voracious lumber and cordwood needs of the Comstock Mining District. Nowhere in the United States was there such a large expenditure of capital and labor to supply the huge mines, mills, and smelters of the Comstock Lode.
Report Prepared By:	Dana E. Supernowicz, Zone Historian, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, 870 Emerald Bay Road, Suite 1, South Lake Tahoe, California 96150.
Date:	October 1994.

I. DESCRIPTION

The Slaughterhouse Canyon segment of the Lake Tahoe Railroad was part of a narrow gauge logging railroad built in 1876 by the Carson and Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company (CTLF) to transport lumber and cordwood from the Glenbrook sawmills to the flumes at Summit Camp (present-day Spooner Summit). At the height of logging in the Lake Tahoe Basin in the 1880s, the CTLF owned over 50,000 acres of timberland.

Between the mid-1860s and the mid-1870s lumber was hauled to the top of Spooner Summit by animal teams and the haul system was not stressed. By the early 1870s, the timber resources east of the Sierra Nevada were exhausted and the Comstock mining barons looked to the vast timber resources of the Lake Tahoe Basin to supply their mines with lumber and cordwood.

The need for a more efficient method of conveying the lumber to the summit was clearly needed to meet the increasing demand. With the enlargement of the Glenbrook sawmill and its increased capacity, Duane L. Bliss succeeded in finding the financing needed for a narrow gauge logging railroad. The CTLF was incorporated in November of 1873 with Bliss as president and general manager. Other major contributors were Darius Ogden Mills, Henry Marvin Yerington, and J.A. Rigby. Within 6 months planning for the construction of the narrow gauge railroad began.

II. CONSTRUCTION

The route was initially surveyed by Comstock civil engineer, Isaac E. James who had also surveyed the Virginia and Truckee Railroad (V&T) in 1868 (Drew, 1982). V&T Chief Engineer Charles L. Anderson performed the final survey toward the end of summer 1874. Construction of the railroad was begun in March of 1875 and the line was completed five months later in August. The main construction crew consisted of 250 men. Four sets of section men continued after the opening to complete construction without interfering with the operation of the trains (Drew, 1982).

Supplies were brought by teams daily from Carson City. The Central Pacific Railroad delivered thirty-five-pound steel rails from the east to Reno which were then hauled to Carson City. Most of the hardware was manufactured at Carson City in the V&T shop. Pine ties were produced at the CTLF mill at Glenbrook (Drew, 1982).

The rise from the lake to the summit was about 1,000 feet. The railroad was nine miles in length, and the location required the construction of a switch-back 6,000 feet in length in order to gain elevation. In addition to the main line grade, there was two and one-half miles of sidings. The railroads maximum grade was 2 percent, or a rise of about 105 feet per mile.

Eleven wooden trestles were required and near the summit a 480 foot tunnel was built.

III. OPERATION

The railroad was operated by three 23-ton locomotives, with six 40-inch drivers. Each locomotive could haul 70 tons of freight at 10 miles per hour. The three locomotives were built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1875 and hauled overland across the Sierra Nevada by oxen and horses. Construction of the railroad virtually eliminated the need for wagon haul between Glenbrook and the summit. Prior to the establishment of the railroad, in 1873, Douglas County produced 906,000 board feet of lumber. In 1875, the County's production rose to 21,700,000 board feet and in 1880 the CTLF produced 20,000,000 board feet on its own. Bliss estimated that by 1887, 500,000,000 board feet had been removed from the area surrounding Glenbrook. The efficiency of the railroad was a major contribution to this dramatic increase in production.

Maintenance of the line required up to 20 men during the primary summer logging season with a much smaller crew keeping it open through the summer months.

IV. POST COMSTOCK HISTORY

The railroad was run successfully until 1890 when a general lack of commercial timber combined with an increase in operating costs resulted in its closure and abandonment. Part of the rolling stock and rail was taken up and barged across the lake to Tahoe City and used in the Lake Tahoe and Transportation Company's standard gauge railroad to Truckee.

The merchantable timber on the east shore of Lake Tahoe had been logged off by the 1890s. During the 1920s recreation use grew around Lake Tahoe and wealthy families established summer home estates along the lakeshore. During the 1920s the Newhall family established an elaborate summer home estate at Skunk Harbor and utilized part of the old Lake Tahoe Railroad grade as an access road to their property. The remainder of the grade was left intact. Currently, the grade is used for recreational hiking and bicycling.

V. SOURCES

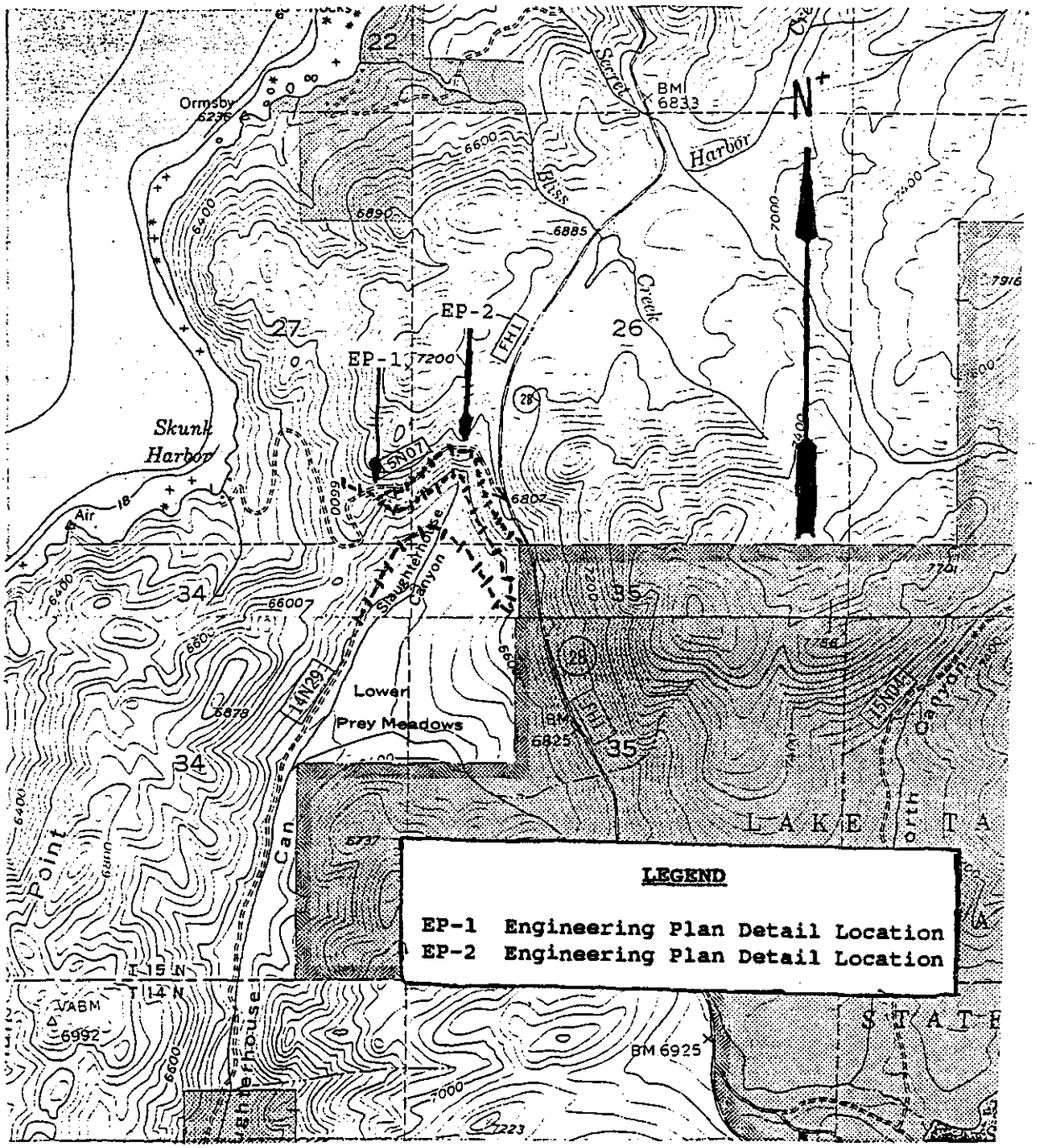
Drew, Stephen D.
1982 Carson & Tahoe Lumber & Fluming Company's Lake Tahoe Narrow Gauge Railroad Locomotive No. 2 'Glenbrook Restoration Feasibility Investigation," Short Line Enterprises, Inc., for the Nevada State Museum.

VI. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation is being prepared to fulfill the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Units (LTBMU) obligations under a Memorandum of Agreement between the LTBMU and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer dated July 7, 1994.

The Principle Investigator was Dana Supernowiczs. The documentation is primarily based on research performed by Stephen D. Drew in 1982 for a study to determine the feasibility of restoring Locomotive No. 2. The photographer was Rudy Gillard of Fortuna California.

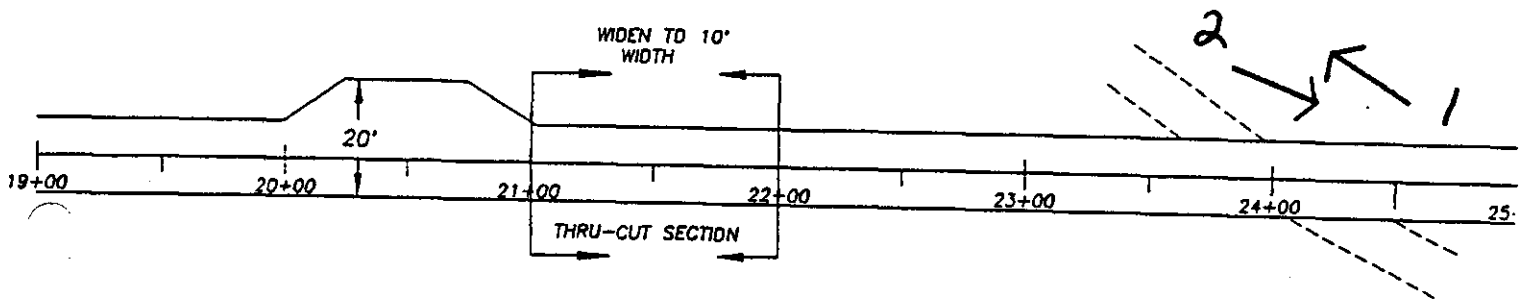
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP: SHOWING LOCATION OF ENGINEERING PLAN DETAILS FOR SLAUGHTERHOUSE RAILROAD GRADE



U.S.G.S. QUAD: Marlette Lake, NV. 7.5 min. 1955
Glenbrook NV. 7.5 min. 1955
Photorevised 1969

Scale:
1:24,000

ENGINEER PLANS SHOWING DETAILS OF ALTERATION TO HISTORIC PORTION (900 FEET) OF THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE RAILROAD INCORPORATED INTO THE SKUNK HARBOR ROAD FS RD 15N67



CONCEPTUAL
NO SCALE

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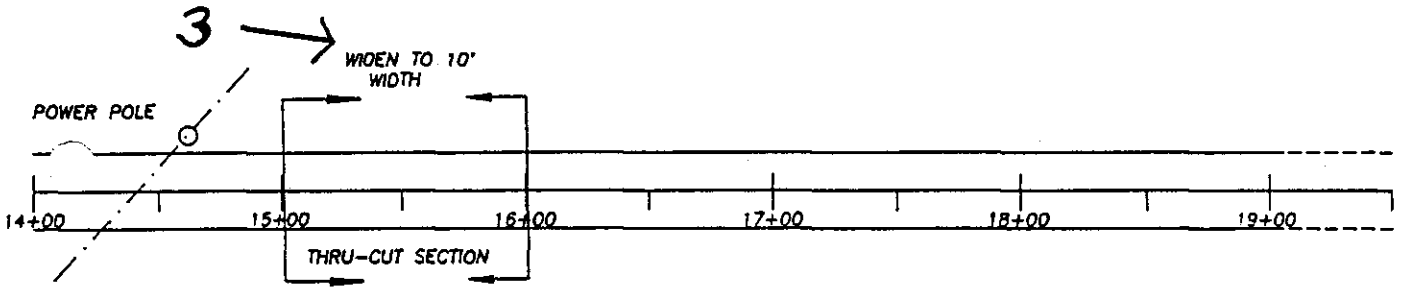

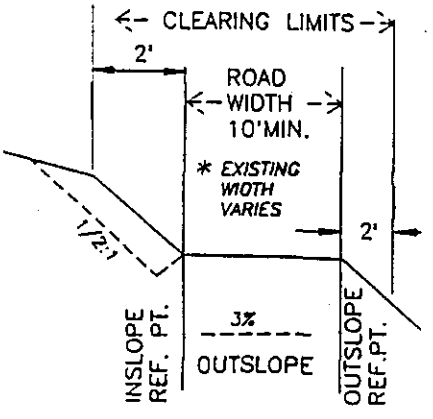

CONCEPTUAL
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